

## **Domnina**

Theodoret of Cyrus, History of the monks of Syria Vol 2, XXX

The admirable Domnina, having resolved to imitate the life of the blessed Maron who I mentioned above, built herself a little cabin in her mother's garden.

At cock crow, she goes to the divine temple not far from there to give praise to the Master of the Universe along with everyone else, women and men.....she has boiled lentils for food.

And she endures all her labours with a skeletal body, half dead.

What worthy praise may one give, then, to this woman, so rich in philosophy, who weeps, laments and groans like those who live in the worst poverty? For this ardent love of God which gives rise to these tears, when he embraces the spirit in divine contemplation, when he pricks with needles and urges to quit this life on earth....For there are still many others who have embraced the solitary life or who have with love led a communal life such that there be about two hundred and fifty who have lived in the same way, taking the same nourishment, sleeping only on mats, using their hands to spin and their tongues to sing hymns.

Such are the innumerable philosophical hermits that one is discouraged from trying to name them, not only in our region, but in the whole of the East. Palestine is full of them, as well as Egypt, Asia, the Levant, the whole of Europe.....indeed, since the day when Christ, our Lord, honoured virginity in being born of a Virgin, nature had produced meadows of virgins who have offered to the Creator the perfume of incorruptible flowers, without distinguishing between masculine and feminine virtue, nor dividing philosophy into two categories, for the difference is in the bodies, not the souls.